

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 09833 151119Z

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3237
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

CONFIDENTIAL BANGKOK 9833

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, IN, TH

SUBJ: PL 480 RICE PROGRAM FOR INDIA

REF: A) STATE 067702 B) BANGKOK 6876 C) NEW DELHI 4888

1. SALIENT SECTIONS FOREIGN OFFICE NOTE RECEIVED APRIL 15

FOLLOW:

QUOTE...WITH REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S
PROPOSED SALE OF 200,000 TONS OF RICE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
UNDER PL 480, HAS THE HONOR TO INFORM THE EMBASSY OF THAILAND'S
POSITION IN THIS REGARD AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HAVE ALREADY AGREED ON THAILAND'S SELLING 60,000 TONS OF PAR-
BOILED RICE TO INDIA, THE PRICE OF WHICH IS STILL UNDER
NEGOTIATION.

B. ONE OF THE REASONS GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WHICH HAS IMPEDED AN EARLY CONCLUSION OF THIS MATTER IS THAT
INDIA HAS THIS YEAR BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT IN THIS STAPLE
FOOD AND THAT SHE ALSO LACKS SUFFICIENT STORAGE FACILITIES.

C. THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND IS, HOWEVER, CONVINCED
THAT AGREEMENT ON THE SELLING PRICE OF THIS AMOUNT OF RICE
WITH INDIA WILL BE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 09833 151119Z

D. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND
STRONGLY FEELS THAT THE SALE OF 200,000 TONS OF RICE OF THE
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO INDIA UNDER PL 480 WOULD HAVE
VERY DAMAGING EFFECT ON THE PRESENT NEGOTIATION BETWEEN
THAILAND AND INDIA. IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GOOD RELATIONS
BETWEEN THAILAND THE UNITED STATES, THE GOVERNMENT OF
THAILAND WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE IF THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT COULD POSTPONE THE CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT ON ITS
PROPOSED SALE OF RICE TO INDIA UNDER PL 480 UNTIL THE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THAILAND AND INDIA HAS BEEN FINALIZED.

E. SINCE THIS MATTER IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THAILAND'S
ECONOMY, IT IS STRONGLY HOPED THAT THIS MODEST REQUEST BY
THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT WILL RECEIVE FAVORABLE AND
SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.
END QUOTE

2. COMMENT: IN SEPARATE EXCHANGE FONOFF OFFICIAL KAMTORN
EXPLAINED NOTE WAS SENT AT REQUEST OF COMMERCE MINISTRY
TO SUPPORT EARLIER REQUEST OF DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FOREIGN TRADE
SUTHI (REF B). ECON COUNSELOR INFORMED KAMTORN SUTHI'S REQUEST
HAD BEEN FORWARDED TO APPROPRIATE USG AUTHORITIES AND THAT WE
DID NOT KNOW STATUS OF PL 480 DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI. THE LAST WORD
WE HAVE ON NEGOTIATIONS IS REF C. WOULD APPRECIATE AN UPDATE
AND INFORMATION ON WHICH TO BASE REPLY TO RTG NOTE.
WHITEHOUSE

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